



ATZ Driving Solutions

Finding solutions to increase independence and road safety

Heavy Vehicle Assessments

Why do I need an assessment?

Driving Heavy Vehicles is an occupation that brings with it a high degree of risk of accident and injury. In line with this risk. With the correlation between medical conditions and chronic injuries not only increasing this risk, but also often impacting on driving performance. Approximately 12% of the NSW licensed population have a licence to drive a heavy vehicle, with professional drivers believed to drive up to 200 000km/yr (long haul). Given that most of this driving work occurs on public roads and freeways, the public expect a high standard of performance from professional drivers.

The consequences of heavy vehicle accidents are serious and given the duty of care to the general public, Doctors and Rehabilitation Providers/Return to Work coordinators are often reluctant to clear professional drivers to return to Heavy Vehicle driving after injury or illness.

ATZ Driving Solutions is able to offer a comprehensive assessment of a driver's off road and on road performance, including assessment of driver related work tasks such as securing loads, exiting vehicles etc

Common Referral Conditions

- Diagnosis of a new medical condition, mental health or psychiatric condition.
- Traumatic Brain Injury, Limb Amputations, Spinal Cord Injury or neurological change
- Recent workplace injury or illness impacting on changes to work fitness.



What should I expect?

After booking an assessment we confirm that you have medical consent and clarify your licence class and status. You will then be booked for the full assessment- this may span 2 days pending vehicle availability.

The Occupational Therapy driving assessment includes screening of vision, physical ability and cognition, followed by an on road assessment in a dual control car (because trucks and buses do not have dual controls so we need to assess safety in a C class vehicle prior to jumping in a truck.)

After successfully passing the C class assessment, the heavy vehicle practical can be completed. In addition to being assessed operating the heavy vehicle, tasks associated with professional driving are also assessed. This is tailored to the driver and may include securing a load, uncoupling a prime mover or moving luggage into a coach storage hold. For the practical on road assessment, a qualified heavy vehicle instructor is in the vehicle along with the OT and the driver.

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What are the outcomes?

The outcomes are dependent on the performance of the individual on the day of assessment. However, generally speaking the result will fall into one of four categories;

- 1.Reinstatement of NSW HV Driver's Licence
- 2.Recommendation for a Conditional Licence; for example you may only be fit to drive an automatic vehicle or only permitted to drive 10km from home
- 3.Suspension or downgrading of your licence until you complete lessons and/or have vehicle modifications fitted; for example a left foot accelerator or hand controls
- 4.Cancellation of your Driver's Licence.

What are vehicle modifications?

Depending on the nature and extent of a person's physical disabilities, vehicle modifications may be required to compensate and provide necessary physical control.

Modifications can range from simple additions such as cushions, or auxiliary mirrors, through to engineered changes to steering such as an electronic steering aid, installation of hand controls or left foot accelerator's. These modifications can all be viewed and trialled during your driving assessment.

However- not all vehicle modifications that get installed in private vehicles can be transferred to a Heavy Vehicle. If modifications are indicated, a case by case assessment is required to determine if it is suitable for exploring Commercial Vehicle modification.



Heavy Vehicle Insurance

Drivers operating a licence class of MR or above, are bound by the Commercial licencing standards. CTP Insurance policies (Greenslip) do not require a notification of medical conditions for the insurance to be valid as it is not a fault based system.

Truck Insurance policies will not pay "for loss or damage caused when someone drives a heavy vehicle after they have received medical advice that their ability to drive may be impaired by their condition or medical treatment."

To ensure you remain covered it is advisable to notify your comprehensive insurer of any changes at the same time that you notify Transport for NSW



Driving and the Law

In NSW when applying for a Driver's licence the applicant has a legal responsibility to notify Transport for NSW (RMS) of any medical, physical or mental condition that could impact on driving. This does not prevent you from getting a licence, but may result in needing an additional form completed by your GP or treating specialist.

Similarly, after obtaining your licence, if there has been a change to your situation, you need to speak with your GP, or specialist to confirm you are medically fit to continue driving.

If you decide to start or return to driving without clearance and are in an accident, you may be considered criminally liable and subject to prosecution under Part 5A of the Crimes Act 1900.

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